

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 19, 1997  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 1997  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 14, 1997

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1997–98 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 898**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Napolitano**

February 27, 1997

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An act to add Section 15364.56 to the Government Code, relating to tourism.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 898, as amended, Napolitano. Tourism: commemoration of Japanese American fishing community.

Existing law establishes the Office of Tourism within the Trade and Commerce Agency. Under existing law, a California Welcome Center may be designated according to conditions established by the Office of Tourism, and a state historical landmark or point of historical interest may be designated pursuant to procedures and criteria established by the State Historical Resources Commission. The existing Tourism Policy Act includes among its purposes encouragement of the preservation and use of California historic and scenic environments to enhance California's appeal as a destination for domestic and international tourism.

This bill would make findings and declarations relating to the fishing community known as Fish Harbor, which was occupied by Japanese American fishermen prior to the

bombing of Pearl Harbor, at which time its residents were removed to internment camps. The bill would require the Office of Tourism to establish a fund for the creation of a Japanese American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center, to be located at Terminal Island, at Worldport Los Angeles, and would ~~declare legislative intent~~ *provide* that a minimum of \$148,000 shall be made available, *upon appropriation in the Budget Act*, from the General Fund for this purpose, contingent upon receipt of ~~a minimum of~~ *at least* \$1,000 in matching funds from private sources. The bill would also direct the Port of Los Angeles to make every effort to ~~be designated~~ *apply for designation as* a California Welcome Center *at any suitable site*, and *as* a state historical landmark or point of historical interest, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares as
- 2 follows:
- 3 (a) In 1901, former fishermen from Japan formed a
- 4 community near San Pedro.
- 5 (b) In 1905, they settled on Terminal Island. This was
- 6 a fishing community, known at the time as Fish Harbor.
- 7 (c) The community grew and prospered until it
- 8 numbered nearly 3,000 Japanese American fishermen,
- 9 fish-cannery workers, merchants, and residents at its
- 10 peak.
- 11 (d) By the 1930s there were at least eight canneries,
- 12 commercial and naval shipyards, oil tanks, steamship
- 13 berths, 60 stores and shops, an elementary school, a
- 14 Baptist mission, a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple.
- 15 (e) After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, rumors began
- 16 to circulate that the village on Fish Harbor was a spy
- 17 colony, and as a result all people of Japanese descent,
- 18 including American citizens, were evicted from the
- 19 island at gunpoint on February 25, 1942.
- 20 (f) With only 48 hours notice, the Japanese American
- 21 residents of Terminal Island were sent to internment

1 camps in a remote and barren mountain area, with only  
2 the possessions they could carry with them.

3 (g) While the residents were imprisoned in  
4 internment camps for the next four years, their homes  
5 were looted, then bulldozed, their fishing boats were  
6 repossessed or stolen, and their fishing nets rotted.

7 (h) Terminal Island was later turned into a military  
8 base, and the fishing village was never rebuilt.

9 (i) Today, there are still 778 paying members of the  
10 Terminal Islanders Club that continue to hold annual  
11 reunions around Los Angeles County.

12 (j) The Japanese American National Museum in Los  
13 Angeles held a very popular exhibition in 1994 called “An  
14 Island in Time: The Terminal Island Story,” and this  
15 exhibition highlighted the Fish Harbor community and  
16 the innovations in fishing that the Japanese Americans  
17 contributed to the industry.

18 (k) The California Tourism Policy Act encourages  
19 “the preservation and use of California Historic and  
20 Scenic environments to enhance the State’s appeal as a  
21 destination for domestic and international tourism.”

22 SEC. 2. Section 15364.56 is added to the Government  
23 Code, to read:

24 15364.56. (a) (1) The Office of Tourism shall  
25 establish a fund for the creation of a Japanese American  
26 Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center, to be located at  
27 Terminal Island, at Worldport Los Angeles.

28 ~~(2) It is the intent of the Legislature that a minimum~~

29 (2) A *minimum* of one hundred forty-eight thousand  
30 dollars (\$148,000) shall be made available, ~~when~~  
31 ~~appropriated upon appropriation in the Budget Act~~, from  
32 the General Fund for purposes of this section, contingent  
33 on the receipt of ~~a minimum of at least~~ one thousand  
34 dollars (\$1,000) in matching funds generated from the  
35 private sector.

36 ~~(b) The Office of Tourism shall request, and the~~  
37 ~~Department of Transportation shall install and maintain,~~  
38 ~~a highway sign that identifies the location of the Japanese~~  
39 ~~American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center.~~

40 ~~(c)~~

1 (b) (1) To the extent practicable and feasible, the  
2 Port of Los Angeles shall make every effort to ~~be~~  
3 ~~designated~~ *apply for designation as a California Welcome*  
4 *Center at any suitable site, including Ports O'Call, the*  
5 *Japanese American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors*  
6 *Center, or any other location deemed appropriate within*  
7 *the Port of Los Angeles, provided that the Port of Los*  
8 *Angeles, in consultation with the Office of Tourism,*  
9 *determines that it can meet all criteria for the Welcome*  
10 *Center program, including the need to be self-funded,*  
11 *sited in an appropriate location, and meeting the*  
12 *long-term interests of the state, pursuant to Section*  
13 *15334.3.*

14 (2) To the extent practicable and feasible, the Port of  
15 Los Angeles shall make every effort to ~~be designated~~  
16 *apply for designation as a state historical landmark or*  
17 *point of historical interest, as appropriate, pursuant to*  
18 *Article 2 (commencing with Section 5020) of Chapter 1*  
19 *of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code.*

20 (c) *If the Japanese American Fishing Village site is*  
21 *designated a state historical landmark or point of*  
22 *historical interest, the Office of Tourism shall request the*  
23 *Office of Historic Preservation within the Department of*  
24 *Parks and Recreation and the Department of*  
25 *Transportation to immediately install and maintain a*  
26 *highway sign that identifies the location of the Japanese*  
27 *American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center.*

28 (d) *If the Japanese American Fishing Village site is*  
29 *designated a California Welcome Center, the Office of*  
30 *Tourism shall request the Department of Transportation*  
31 *to immediately install and maintain a highway sign that*  
32 *identifies the location of the Japanese American Fishing*  
33 *Village Memorial Visitors Center.*